

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00  
FMC-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09 OES-07 PA-02  
PRS-01 USIA-15 /062 W  
-----039421 020120Z /63

R 010700Z NOV 77

FM AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

TO USDOC WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1345

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

UNCLAS ALEXANDRIA 1145

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, EG

SUBJECT: CONGESTION AT PORT OF ALEXANDRIA

1. ACCORDING TO AL AHAM FOR 31 OCTOBER, 1977, PORT OF ALEXANDRIA IS PRESENTLY FACING ANOTHER CONGESTION CRISIS. REPORTEDLY 75 SHIPS ARE NOW AT ANCHOR OUTSIDE PORT WAITING THEIR TURN TO BERTH (ANYTHING OVER ABOUT 20 WAITING INDICATES TROUBLE) WITH BACKLOG INCREASING AT THE RATE OF ONE SHIP A DAY. SOME SHIPS HAVE BEEN WAITING THERE FOR OVER A MONTH FOR ENTRY TO PORT AND OPPORTUNITY DISCHARGE CARGOS.

2. DISCHARGING OPERATIONS ARE BEING CARRIED OUT AROUND THE CLOCK IN THREE 8 HOUR SHIFTS AND ARE UNLOADING SOME 20,000 TONS PER DAY. PAPER CLAIMS THAT CARGO WITHDRAWAL FROM PORT AREA IS SLOW AND PORT IS BECOMING JAMMED WITH MERCHANDISE DUMPED HAPHAZARDLY ON QUAYS THREATENING TYPE OF JAM-UP THAT WAS STRANGLING PORT TWO YEARS AGO.

3. AS OF 30 OCTOBER THERE ARE OUTSIDE THE PORT 23 VESSELS CARRYING CEMENT, 10 CARRYING FOODSTUFFS INCLUDING FROZEN MEAT AND CHICKEN, 7 CARRYING CHEMICALS, 4 CARRYING INSECTICIDES AND FERTILIZERS, 3 CARRYING COKE, 2 CARRYING IRON AND STEEL  
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PIPES. THE REMAINDER CARRY ASSORTED GENERAL CARGO.

4. AL AHAM CLAIMS PORT AUTHORITY IS PAYING DEMURRAGE TO SHIP-OWNERS AT THE RATE OF \$400 PER 100 M.T. OF CARGOES AND BEFORE THIS CRISIS IS RESOLVED MILLIONS OF POUNDS IN HARD CURRENCIES WILL HAVE BEEN PAID IN PENALTIES. IN ADDITION, WITH THE RAINY SEASON APPROACHING, MORE LOSSES WILL COME FROM

WATER DAMAGE TO SUCH GOODS AS WHEAT, FLOUR, PAPER AND OTHER MERCHANDISE STORED IN THE OPEN. THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED 200,000 M.T. OF GOODS LYING NOW ON THE DOCKS AND IN THE WAREHOUSES, WITH THE TOTAL GROWING EVERY DAY.

5. COMMENT: SITUATION ON DOCKS IS NOT RPT NOT AS GLOOMY AS AL AHRAH PAINTS PICTURE. IT IS FAR BETTER THAN THIS TIME LAST YEAR. HOWEVER, PROBLEM OF WAITING SHIPS OFFSHORE IS WORSE THAN PAPER STATES. SKILLED OBSERVER COUNTED 105 SHIPS AT ANCHOR ON 30 OCTOBER AND REPORTS ONE VESSEL HAS BEEN WAITING TWO MONTHS.

6. RAINY SEASON STARTED ALMOST ONE MONTH EARLIER THAN USUAL THIS YEAR, WITH TORRENTIAL DOWNPOUR 17 OCTOBER. HEAVY SHOWERS HAVE OCCURED IN EARLY MORNING HOURS OF 27, 29 AND 31 OCTOBER AND 1 NOVEMBER.

7. TRUE WINTER STORMS CAN CLOSE HARBOR, DUE GALE WINDS AND HIGH WAVES, FOR ONE TO THREE DAYS AT A TIME, WITH AN AVERAGE FIFTEEN NEW ARRIVALS ADDED EACH DAY TO WAITING FLEET. CHASE

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## Message Attributes

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